



## Office of Inspector General

2nd Quarter 2016

### Introduction

The majority of tasks performed during the second quarter were focused on developing an OIG database and tracking system and continuing to work with the Sheriff's Department to implement an enhanced complaint process. Additional tasks included the continuing review of two officer involved shootings, an incident outside of the Family Relations Courthouse, and an officer involved shooting on June 18<sup>th</sup>.

### Complaint/Commendation Intake Process

The ability of the community to submit a complaint has been enhanced with the OIG web site as well as recent revisions to the Sheriff's Department process including the department web site. As more data becomes available, the effect of increased accessibility will be better known.

### Complaint/Commendation Intake Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations offered to the Sheriff's Department to improve accessibility of the community to commend or make a complaint. The Sheriff's Department response to the recommendation follows in italics.

1. The recommendation was to review printed material and website to reinforce the openness of the complaint process including a listing of all locations where a complaint is accepted and the ability of a person to make a complaint.

*The Sheriff's Department has added an [Internal Affairs](#) "page" on the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department website, providing an address, telephone and fax number, and hours of operation. The department created an email address [InternalAffairs@sacsheriff.com](mailto:InternalAffairs@sacsheriff.com) which goes directly to Professional Standards Division staff and is accessible by the Lieutenant and Captain of PSD. Additionally, the department added a link for a [Citizen Commendation and/or Complaint](#) form with the ability to submit the document electronically. This form, which was previously difficult to locate, is now accessible in three separate locations; on the home page under "[Online Reporting System](#)", on the Internal Affairs home page, and under department forms.*

2. It was recommended the department develop a web based submittal form for both commendations and complaints that also allows a community member to remain anonymous. The OIG accepts anonymous complaints.

*The revised Sheriff's Department complaint form now allows the user to check a box if they wish to remain anonymous.*

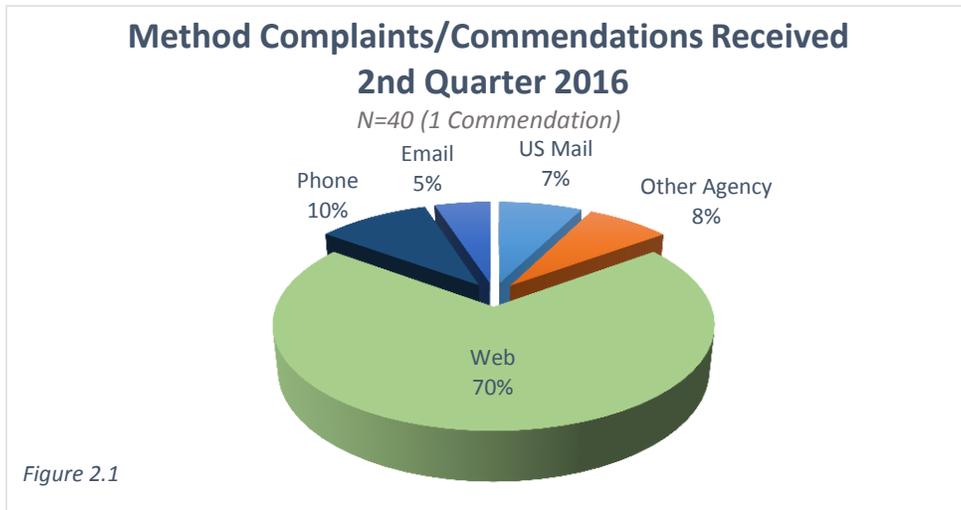
3. It was suggested the department review, edit, and supplement the current hard copy complaint form with a fillable field document for both complaints and commendations. The form may then be submitted via email, US Mail, faxed, or hand delivered. The form should include only the fields necessary to investigate the complaint.

*The department's revised complaint/commendations form has fillable fields and can be submitted directly to Internal Affairs by email, fax, sent by US Mail, or hand-delivered. Additionally, the complaint/commendation form was updated to require only necessary information to initiate an investigation or commend an employee.*

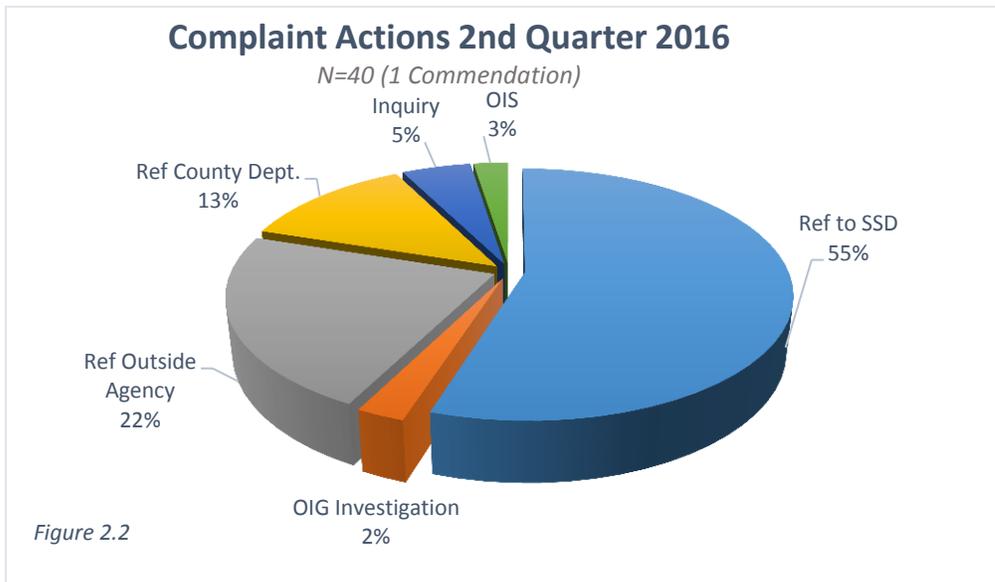
### **Complaint Summary for the Second Quarter 2016**

The following represent the method complaints were received by the Office of Inspector General and the actions taken, such as referred to another agency for non-Sheriff's Department personnel, sent to the Sheriff's Professional Standards Division for investigation, or investigated by the OIG.

The Office of Inspector General received 39 complaints and 1 commendation during the 2nd quarter of 2016. Twenty-eight (70%) of the complaints/commendation were submitted on-line using the OIG web form. By comparison during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter the OIG received 40 complaints and 2 commendations with 46% submitted on-line. Individuals wishing to remain anonymous during the reporting period accounted for 7 complaints with 4 of the 7 involving outside agencies.



Of the total complaints received, 22 were sent to the Sheriff’s Department for investigation or information and 14 were forwarded to other agencies or county departments. During the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, 44% of complaints were referred to the Sheriff’s Department and 33% of complaints forwarded to outside agencies or other county departments. Complaints involving county departments may include personnel complaints, service assistance, or complaints about private sector entities that a county department has inspection/enforcement responsibility. All complaints involving the County were forwarded to the appropriate department manager.



## Tracking of Community Complaints

The Office of Inspector General has completed a data collection system that will be used to record, track, and report basic complaint information received by the OIG. The system will be used in conjunction with reports generated by the Sheriff’s Departments complaint case management system.

## Tracking Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations offered to the Sheriff’s Department to improve tracking of complaints. The Sheriff’s Department response to the recommendation follows in italics.

1. The Sheriff’s Department should work with the Internal Affairs case management software vendor to develop a comprehensive plan that will better utilize how information is categorized, tracked, and reported. The plan should include a strategy for legislative reporting requirements.

*Sheriff’s Department personnel met with the software vendor (IAPro) to learn how to better utilize how information is categorized, tracked, and reported. This training was*

*instrumental and assisted the department in more efficiently tracking community and internally generated complaints. The department has transitioned to one numbering system to track all complaints, thus allowing for more accurate reporting including legislatively mandated reports.*

2. It was recommended personnel assigned to the PSD should receive additional training specific to the software. This should include ways to identify trends that may be of concern to the community and Department. The training should include standardized curriculum for all new investigators and staff.

*The Professional Standards Division has requested training for new and current staff.*

3. The Department should work with regional law enforcement agencies to create a software users' group to facilitate the sharing of best practices. A users' group would benefit all agencies in the sharing of best practices and serve as a resource to help maintain proficiency.

*Two lieutenants have been assigned to lead an internal Users' Group and conduct a study into the benefits of purchasing an early warning system. The study is still underway and they have reached out to several agencies to discuss the capabilities of the software.*

## **Notable Incidents**

### *Family Relations Courthouse*

Earlier this year the Board was informed of an incident that occurred November 17, 2015 at the Family Relations Court (FRC). During the incident a 9-year-old child was photographed kneeling in handcuffs and surrounded by deputies. The photograph was posted on social media.

The Office of Inspector General conducted a review of the incident which included reviewing the Sheriff's Department incident report and emails, viewing a video of the encounter, and speaking with Sheriff's Department staff and the grandmother of the child. The following is a summary of the event, lessons learned and recommendations.

On November 17, 2015, the child and his grandmother (who is raising him) were in Family Court to determine the best placement for the child. It was the determination of the Court that the child should be placed in a group home. To reduce the emotional impact on the family the grandmother and child left the courtroom through separate exits. Unfortunately, there was an unintended meeting of the two at the exit of the courthouse. The child became very agitated and aggressive toward the grandmother and bystanders. Deputies were summoned and when they arrived the 9-year-old remained agitated and was swearing at his grandmother, bystanders, and deputies. At one point the child picked up a 3 to 4-foot-long tree branch and started to swing at

his grandmother. Deputies took the stick away from the 9-year-old and handcuffed him to avoid any additional confrontations. He then sat and later knelt on the sidewalk refusing to stand up.

After a delay, the group home representatives arrived with a vehicle to transport the child. During the delay the child continued to swear at deputies and bystanders and after being unhandcuffed threatened to hit workers with his shoe. Eventually the child was calm enough to go with the group home staff.

During an interview with the grandmother she was asked about the response of the deputies and what could have been done differently. The grandmother was very complimentary of the deputies and their calm demeanor in handling the situation. She related that her grandson struggles with anger issues and his anger and subsequent outburst occurred when he saw her at the exit. She stated that the only way to avoid this in the future is to ensure accidental encounters do not happen. Immediately following the incident the grandmother was asked by deputies what they could have done differently. She told them that had she gone back inside the courthouse sooner the situation may have diffused more quickly.

#### *Lessons Learned/Recommendations*

The lessons learned and recommendations are based on the facts of this incident and best practices. It should be noted that prior to this review the Sheriff's Department had conducted their own review and identified similar key lessons learned and areas for improvement.

- The video recording of incidents such as this are critical to the documentation of events. Deputies videotaped the incident as soon as a camera arrived, however the delay in retrieving the video camera resulted in the first moments of the interaction not being recorded. Body worn cameras would greatly assist in the review of deputy/community interaction. As the Sheriff's Department continues the body worn camera study, consideration should be given to include all uniform line personnel regardless of assignment.
- The Sheriff's Department is working with court staff to ensure that the separation of involved parties continues until all parties leave the property.
- Everyone involved identified a need to separate the grandmother from her grandson more quickly. The need to quickly separate involved parties to deescalate a situation should be reinforced in training.
- The lack of a holding area designed to accommodate juveniles and the delay in retrieving a vehicle to transport the child created a public spectacle that likely contributed to the continued outburst, threats, and swearing. Sheriff's staff should work with court personnel to identify separation areas that can accommodate juveniles.

As an addendum to this review the grandmother expressed a need for county assistance in several areas and Health and Human Services was able to reach out to her.

**Tasks in-progress**

- Review of the Sheriff's Department complaint investigative and findings process
- Work with the Sheriff's Department in the development of an early warning system
- Review of three fatal officer involved shootings
- Review one death at the Main Jail